

**Statement by H.E. Mr. WASHIO Eiichiro,
State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
At the Second Annual Meeting of the Aswan Forum
1-5 March, 2021**

Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the holding of the Second Annual Meeting of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development. I would also like to pay tribute to the strong leadership of Egypt in convening the Forum.

Mr. Chair,

While Africa appears to be spared the worst of COVID-19 so far, the pandemic has brought about tremendous socio-economic impacts to Africa. The spread of the virus has laid bare vulnerability of state institutions in many countries in Africa, notably in the health sector. These circumstances have made it even harder for African countries to face various challenges to peace and security that persist across the continent. This multi-faceted crisis is threatening people's lives and dignity, putting their human security in jeopardy.

Strong and trustworthy state institutions are essential for sustaining peace and protecting people. Indeed, COVID-19 has come to underscore anew the importance of addressing the root causes of conflicts and terrorism through building institutions, with African countries sitting in the driver's seat.

Mr. Chair,

This is exactly what Japan seeks to achieve through its New Approach for Peace and Stability in Africa, or NAPSA, that Japan launched at the seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD7) held in Yokohama in 2019.

It is from this perspective that, on the occasion of two rounds of visits to Africa last December and January, Mr. Motegi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, demonstrated Japan's resolve to strongly support Africa to build back better from the pandemic, including through its efforts under the banner of NAPSA.

Mr. Chair,

Among many contributions that Japan has been making under NAPSA so far, let me touch upon Japan's steadfast support for South Sudan's nation building. As the spread of COVID-19 is putting a severe strain on South Sudan like elsewhere in Africa, I

would like to renew Japan's commitment to contribute to the strengthening of their state institutions in broad areas such as customs and police. Japan will also continue to work with relevant African organizations such as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU) with a view to helping implement the South Sudanese peace process.

Mr. Chair,

Allow me to commend CCCPA for its excellent work as secretariat of this Forum. This center and other PKO training centers in Africa embody Africa's ownership in peace building efforts. Their various programs and activities are very much in line with African Union's initiative of "Silencing the Guns".

Highly valuing a key role that these centers are playing in the field of peace and security in Africa, Japan has long been providing support to them as part of NAPSA. With regard to CCCPA in particular, I would like to take this opportunity to announce that the Government of Japan has just decided to make an additional financial contribution amounting to 1 million US dollars to this center.

Mr. Chair,

The key to the stability and prosperity of the international community lies in dynamism created by the interconnection between two continents: rapidly growing Asia on the one hand, and Africa with great potential on the other. Japan thus hopes to realize a "free and open Indo-Pacific", enriching the confluence of the Pacific and Indian Oceans and of Asia and Africa.

Under this vision, Japan will pursue its efforts in Africa to ensure (1) international order based on the rule of law, (2) economic prosperity through enhanced connectivity, and (3) peace and stability. We are confident that these efforts are particularly relevant in Africa, as this continent tackles the COVID-19 crisis and advances on its pathway for post-COVID sustainable peace and development.

The pandemic reinforces the need for further international cooperation. I would like to invite African countries and other partners present at this Forum to work together under this vision to overcome the crisis and to lay a solid foundation for further stability and prosperity in Africa.

Mr. Chair,

In the face of COVID-19, the Aswan Forum has proved itself to be an invaluable platform to garner international support to shape Africa's new normal: "recovering stronger, rebuilding better".

In this vein, I would like to assure you that Japan remains committed to the Aswan Forum as a strategic partner. Let me conclude by reiterating Japan's determination to strongly support African-led peace building efforts towards TICAD8 to be held in Tunisia in 2022.

Thank you for your attention.

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